

## K A M T S C H A T K A, &amp;c. 209

his belly, being, as he said, ordered to do it by the mushroom. 276

The *Kamtshadales* and the *Koreki* eat of it when they resolve to murder any body; and it is in such esteem among the *Koreki*, that they do not allow any one that is drunk with it to make water upon the ground, but they give him a vessel to save his urine in, which they drink, and it has the same effect as the mushroom itself. None of this mushroom grows in their country, so that they are obliged to purchase it of the *Kamtshadales*. Three or four of them are a moderate dose, but when they want to get drunk they take ten. 276 439

The women never use it; so that all their merriment consists in jesting, dancing, and singing. Their dance is in this manner: The two women that are to dance spread a mat in the middle of the room, and kneel down upon it opposite to one another, having a little tow in each hand. At first they begin to sing very low, moving a little their hands and shoulders; by degrees they raise their voice, and encrease the motions of their bodies, 'till they are quite out of breath and fatigued. This strange, uncouth entertainment, as it appeared to me, seemed greatly to delight the *Kamtshadales*: so strongly is every nation prejudiced in favour of its own customs. 530

In their love-songs they declare their passion to their lovers, their grief, hope, and other affections. The women generally compose them, and have clear, agreeable voices. Though they do not want an inclination for musick, yet they have no musical instrument, except a simple flute, and upon that they cannot play any tune. 534

Another of their amusements is mimicking other people in their speaking, walking, and all other actions. Whenever a stranger comes to *Kamtshatka* they give him a new name, and observe every thing about him very carefully, which they mimic 536

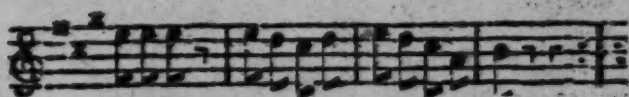
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for their diversion in all their entertainments. 537

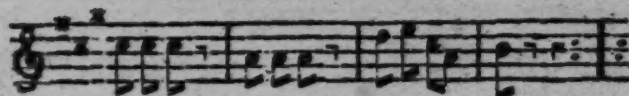
177 The dancers of whom we speak, have so  
563 much vanity as to hold in contempt the  
 songs and dances of the natives. The toi-  
 let of the women on these occasions is an  
 object of no trivial attention. They deck  
 themselves out in all their allurements, and  
 whatever is most costly. These ceremo-  
 nious and ball dresses are principally of  
 silks; and in the article of commerce we  
 have already seen that they must be expen-  
152 five. I shall finish this account with a re-  
837 mark that I had occasion to make, both in  
 these assemblies and in those of the Kamt-  
 schadales; it is, that the majority of hus-  
 bands, Russians as well as natives, are not  
 susceptible of jealousy; they voluntarily  
 flout their eyes upon the conduct of their  
 wives, and are as docile as possible upon  
 this chapter.

533 The entertainments and assemblies of the  
535 native Kamtschadales, at which I was also

533 present, offered a spectacle equally enti-  
 535 tled to notice for its singularity. I know  
 not which struck me most, the song or the  
 dance. The dance appeared to me to be  
 that of savages. It consisted in making re-  
 gular movements, or rather unpleasant and  
 difficult distortions, and in uttering at the  
 same time a forced and guttural sound,  
 like a continued hiccough, to mark the  
 time of the air sung by the assembly, the  
 words of which are frequently void of sense,  
 even in Kamtschadale. I noted down one  
 of these airs, which I shall insert in this  
 place, in order to give an idea of their  
 music and metre.



Daria, Daria, da, Daria, ha, nou



dalatché, damatché, kanna, koukiz.

*Da Capo.*

The

533 The words mean,

Daria \*, Daria sings and dances still.

This air is repeated without ceasing.

535 In their dances they are fond of imitat-  
825 ing the different animals they pursue, such  
as the partridge and others, but principally  
the bear. They represent its sluggish and  
stupid gait, its different feelings and situa-  
tions; as the young ones about their dam;  
the amorous sports of the male with the  
female; and lastly, its agitation when pur-  
sued. They must have a perfect knowledge  
of this animal, and have made it their par-  
ticular study, for they represent all its mo-  
tions as exactly, I believe, as it is possible.  
I asked the Russians, who were greater  
connoisseurs than myself, having been of-  
tener present at the taking of these animals,

\* Daria is a female Russian name.

whether

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whether their pantomime ballets were well executed ; and they assured me that the dancers were the best in the country, and that the cries, gait, and various attitudes of the bear, were as accurate as life. Meanwhile, without offence to the amateurs, these dances are, in my opinion, not less fatiguing to the spectators than to the performers. It is a real pain to see them distort their hips, dislocate every limb, and wear out their lungs; to express the excess of pleasure which they take in these strange balls, which, I repeat it, resemble the absurd diversions of savages: the Kamtschadales may indeed, in many respects, be considered as of that rank.

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Having given an account of the address with which these people counterfeit the postures and motions of the bear, who may be called their dancing master, it may not be unpleasing to relate in what manner they hunt

000 lky seemed to threaten us with a second tempest before the end of the day. It began to rise about two o'clock in the afternoon, and lasted till the evening.

535 To divert our attention, it was proposed to us to try the abilities of a celebrated female dancer, who was a Kamtschadale, and lived in this ostrog. The encomiums bestowed upon her excited our curiosity, and we sent for her; but either from caprice or ill humour she refused to dance, and paid no regard to our invitation. It was in vain they represented that her refusal was disrespectful to the governor general; no consideration could induce her to comply. Fortunately we had some brandy by us, and a bumper or two seemed to effect a change in her inclinations. At the same time a Kamtschadale, at our request, began to dance before her, challenging her by his voice and gestures. Gradually her eyes sparkled, her

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535 countenance became convulsive, and her whole frame shook upon the bench where she sat. To the enticements and shrill song of the dancer, she answered in similar accents, beating time with her head, which turned in every direction. The movements became at last so rapid, that, no longer able to contain herself, she darted from her seat, and in turn defied her man by cries and distortions still more extravagant. — It is not easy to express the absurdity of the dance. All her limbs seemed to be disjointed; she moved them with equal strength and agility; she tore her cloaths, and fixed her hands to her bosom with a kind of rage as if she would tear it also. These singular transports were accompanied with still more singular postures; and in short, it was no longer a woman, but a fury. In her blind frenzy she would have rushed into the fire that was kindled in the middle of the room, if her husband had not taken the precau-

535 tion of placing a bench before it to prevent her: during the whole dance indeed he took care to keep himself close to her. When he saw that her head was perfectly gone, that she staggered on all sides, and could no longer support herself without laying hold of her fellow dancer, he took her in his arms and placed her upon a bench, where she fell, like an inanimate clod, without consciousness, and out of breath. She continued five minutes in this situation. Meanwhile the Kamtschadale, proud of his triumph, continued to dance and to sing. Recovering from her swoon, the woman heard him, and suddenly, in spite of her weakness, she raised herself up, uttered some inarticulate sounds, and would have begun again this labourous contest. Her husband kept her back, and interceded for her; but the conqueror, believing himself to be indefatigable, continued his jeers and bantering, and we were obliged to exert our authority to

535 to quiet him. In spite of the praises that were lavished upon the talents of these actors, the scene, I confess, afforded me no amusement, but on the contrary, considerable disgust.

276 All the inhabitants of this place, women as well as men, smoke and chew tobacco. By a refinement that I cannot account for, they mix ashes with the tobacco to make it stronger. We gave them some snuff, and they applied it not to their nose, but to their mouth. I examined their pipes: they are of the same shape as those of the Chinese, made of bone, and very small. When they make use of them, they do not emit the smoke from their mouth, but swallow it with great gratification.

000 All the toyons of the different ostrogs we had passed in coming from Ozernoi, out of respect to M. Kasloff, had escorted us as

24: Lansdell-639 [3]

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( 1879 ) 1882

Kamchatdal

116, 181, 533, 535, 825

" The Kamchatdales have not the heroic character of their neighbours the Koriaks. Their plaintive songs do not celebrate battles, but love, sledge travels, fishing, and hunting. In their dances they mimic admirably the movements of animals, bounding like the deer, running like the fox, and even entering the water to swim like the seal. "

"I did not see the Kamtschadale dance here [CMC: at Bolsheretsk], but among the Kosaks of Petropaulowsk, who give it the preference, it is so indecent, that every modest woman would blush to be a spectator, much more a partner in it. A woman makes the commencement by stepping forward into the middle of the Isba, and holding a cloth spread out before her in a transverse direction. She shifts her feet slowly, making a variety of motions with her hands, head, and body. Her head sinks alternately on one shoulder or the other, on her back or on her breast. She then at length advances to a man, and renews this gesticulation close before him, which implies as much as soliciting his hand to the dance. He accordingly takes hold of the cloth in the same manner, and rising from his seat, they both commence the distortion of all their limbs together. The woman turns every now and then away from the man, but returns to him instantly again, sinking gradually upon her knees, and then bending herself backward with a similar gesticulation; the man also in the mean time falling down and reclining himself over her, the dance is concluded with the most obscene gestures. While it lasts, both dancers and spectators all sing to one song, consisting of the words an-kelle, an-kaget, incessantly repeated: but they have a variety of such monotonous ditties, adapted to the same species of dancing. In some of their dances, they imitate birds and beasts; the man for example representing the male, and the woman the female-bear; and sometimes there is a company of these imitators, who amuse themselves together, either in running like partridges, gabbling like geese, or in aping some other animal."

000 be, I could not help laughing. The guide could hardly have intended a performance of the kind, which might have caused serious consequences; it is true, he was a little in liquor, but that was my fault rather than his.

The velocity and facility with which we had descended the declivity, was more than equalled by the difficulty we had in ascending from it. To drag me and the narte from the abyss required all the dogs of the other vehicles, as well as the help of all the drivers, yet we succeeded at length; when upon replacing the baggage, my pocket-book, containing passports and other papers relative to my journey were missing; this, though perhaps an imaginary evil would have been severely felt by me. For a long time we searched in vain, turning up the snow, and at last I gave them up for lost. Such a loss never did, nor probably ever will happen to any other person: the papers which formed its contents are not likely to be again granted. The poor guide was the picture of despair, and vowed to do penance if he could only recover them, which at last was effected through the exertions of the brandy chief. We arrived thence all well, and fared heartily. Napanas contains eight dwellings and an excellent Toion, who induced the people under his command to show me the national dance. The poor fellows willingly obliged me, showing the improvements they have made upon the practice of bears, or rather, perhaps, on that of goats. The dance consists in a variety of distortions of features

535 and limbs, all doubtless derived from the ridiculous and wanton customs of their ancestors. The dance of the Cossacks is equally bad if not worse, yet I have seen it often practised in Yakutsk by females who should have known better. The woman, who is the principal performer, commences the dance with a handkerchief extended by the hands, somewhat like our own shawl dances; now used to hide her face from one, then from another, but always with the object of singling out him whom she most prefers as her partner. In a most unbecoming posture she approaches the favourite from the centre of the room; now dropping her head with a pensive air alternately upon each breast or shoulder, while her hands are employed in committing outrages upon decorum. The man, having taken hold of the handkerchief, joins the dance; the woman now reluctantly affecting to quit, appears again as anxious to rejoin him; this sort of antic motion is continued, till at length the woman sinks as from fatigue upon her knees, and in the act of falling is dexterously recovered by the man; and thus the dance closes. The agility and imitative powers of these wild Asiatics are really surprising, and I make no doubt that were they to have an opportunity of seeing the modern improvement in the art of dancing, as exhibited now-a-days in various public theatres, they would be found capable of imitating, not only *bears* and *goats*, but *geese* also.

000 From Napanas I proceeded down the river of its own name to its junction with the Tygilsk, hav-